28: Spiro--42 [4] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 462, 517 Ifalik

"The women's tasks are more numerous and time-consuming than the men's, so that it is not unusual to see the men sitting in the canoe-houses with nothing to do, but quite unusual for the women."

28: Spiro--146 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 512, 462, 517 Ifalik

"The women spend their days in various activities. If they work in the taro patches, they remain the entire morning and part of the afternoon. Otherwise, they may cook or work on a skirt, or look after the house. Like the men, the women do not like to work alone, and usually gather in groups for their work, at which time conversation and gossip, as well as singing, are all part of the day's activity. Some of the work, like cooking is enhanced by the women working in groups. But usually, the work itself is entirely individualistic, the gathering together, being entirely for reasons of sociability and conversation."

28: Spiro--146 [4]
116, 883, 517

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"The adolescent boys may sit around the canoe houses with the men, or may, as in the district of Felarik, have a canoe house of their own in which they congregate. The activity, however, is the same as in the case of the older men. They, too, often sit about, just staring blankly into space. One favorite activity of the young men is the sharpening of knives. Whenever they have nothing to do, or if conversation lags, they will take out their knives and sharpen them on the whetstone, with the result that their knives are razor-sharp and it is no surprise that they shave with them. (7)"

"7. There is little rationality in their almost compulsive knife sharpening. The knives are already sharp. It is likely that this preoccupation has unconscious, symbolic significance. I have no evidence but suspect that is is related to certain sexual anxieties, perhaps a castration anxiety."

28: Spiro--147 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 517, 226 Ifalik

"Often, the young men will go fishing in the afternoon, and what they catch is eaten by them immediately. The playing of checkers or cards may take up an entire morning or afternoon."

28: Spiro--147 [6] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 512, 517 Ifalik

"After dinner, activity again breaks down into sex and age categories. The families sit about, talking, drinking toddy, smoking, and exchanging news of the day. Often, a couple visits its in-laws. Some families may sing a chapeng until they retire, others may visit the home of a sick person. During the dark of the moon, the family usually retires to the interior of the house when it gets dark, and go to sleep shortly after. The children usually going to sleep at the same time as the parents.

On moonlit nights, the people do not retire until much later. They remain out-of-doors, with seemingly great spirits, and laughter may be heard ringing out from many courtyards."

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

CHAPTER V

MOSTLY ABOUT FOOD

461
517
567

Much time on Ifaluk was spent in sitting—men sitting around the canoe houses, women sitting around the cook houses. I had the impression that the men were more apt to just sit, and the women to sit and chatter; but this impression was probably a carry-over from preconceived ideas about my own culture. Certainly, in fact, the men in the canoe houses often carried on interminable conversations; but certainly also they were frequently silent and contemplative—or drowsy.

643

This fitted my temperament fine. Since childhood I have been an inveterate sitter (and day dreamer). My most frequent companion in the sitting process on Ifaluk was Fagolier, the paramount chief. From the beginning he fascinated me with his poise and dignity, his character-lined face. I had a curious feeling of rapport sitting with him, sharing a mat or a coconut log, smoking, occasionally exchanging a grin, but feeling no real need of trying to say anything.

He had all of the qualities that should go with the paramount chieftainship—the assurance and humility of security; a calm, reliable decisiveness; an ever-present courtesy and thoughtfulness. I wondered often what he was really like, how much this picture of him was the product of my own imaginings, whether I saw him as he was, or whether I saw only the projection of my own concepts of a chief. Yet I gained confidence in my mental portrait because it always seemed to correspond with my observations. Then I would still wonder whether this was a tribute to Fagolier, or a tribute to the flexibility of my